the armed forces, such as unwanted sexual come-ons, offensive displays of affection or taking advantage of a subordinate. People who have been kicked out of the military for being gay are being invited to rejoin.

■ Glen Mahon and Ian Monaghan, both of Sligo, Ireland, have been sentenced to eight years in prison each for beating a gay American author nearly to death last year. The two were convicted in October of intentionally or recklessly causing serious harm to Robert Drake, who was living in Ireland at the time.

■ Officials of the city of Rome voted Jan. 17 to fund cultural aspects of World Pride Rome 2000, the largest ever gay event held in the city and the first worldwide Pride celebration, scheduled for July 1 – 9.

– Rex Wockner contributed

AIDS rises in men of color

Men of color who have sex with men now account for a greater proportion of AIDS cases than white men who do, according to a report released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Jan. 14. And the stigma of homosexuality may play a key role in those numbers.

Based on an examination of AIDS cases in the U.S. over the last decade, the CDC found that men of color in 1998 accounted for 52 percent of all cases among men who have sex with men, compared to 31 percent in 1989. White men accounted for 48 percent of all such cases, but the figure is down considerably from 69 percent in 1989. African-American men comprised one-third of all cases among men of color who have sex with men, while Latino men represented 18 percent. New York City had the highest number of cases among African-American men who have sex with men, followed by Washington, D.C., and Atlanta. New York and Miami had the highest cases among Latinos, and Los Angeles and Phoenix led the figures for Asian/Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaska Natives.

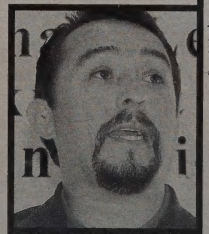
In addition to economic factors contributing to the rise – high rates of poverty, unemployment and lack of access to health care – the stigma of homosexuality within those communities may be a key factor, the CDC said. The study reported the results of a survey that found 24 percent of African-American men and 15 percent of Latinos who have sex with other men identified themselves as heterosexual. By contrast, only 6 percent of white men who have sex with men identified as heterosexual.

Researchers believe anti-gay feelings in communities of color may inhibit men from identifying as gay or bisexual and prevent them from seeking or receiving the HIV prevention and treatment services they need. Also, these men may not accept their own risks for HIV and unintentionally put their female partners and children at risk. According to the CDC, one important element of prevention efforts is to provide anonymous HIV test sites to help ensure that stigma and fear don't prevent men from being tested. The statement runs counter to the CDC's policy of urging states to begin reporting the names of people with HIV.

"Access to culturally appropriate health services and information will address homophobia and ignorance in our communities and begin to redress the damage it has caused," commented Martin Ornelas-Quintero, executive director of LLEGO, the National Latina/o Gay Organization. "That's where our HIV/AIDS dollars should be invested."

The study also points to the need to reach men of color at an early age. Among men who have sex with men diagnosed with HIV during the decade, 16 percent of African Americans and 13 percent of Latinos were age 13 – 24, compared to 9 percent of white men.

In a related story, President Bill Clinton will ask Congress for $175 million for AIDS treatment and prevention programs in his 2001 budget proposal, administration officials said Jan. 17. Clinton also will ask Congress to approve $50 million to fund state and local prevention programs administered by the CDC. It's the most the administration has ever asked for prevention.



Rex Wockner

Latino activist Martin Ornelas-Quintero.

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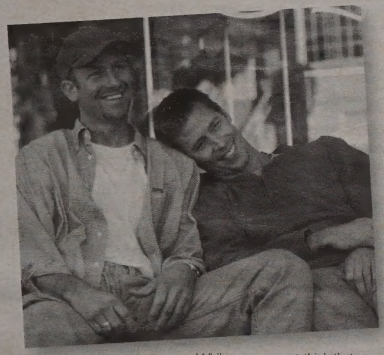

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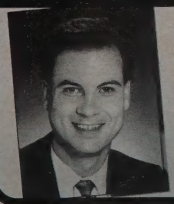

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flight to Bali and a stewardess told him to take his head off his lover's shoulder.

■ Police officials in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, are pleased the department has responded favorably to an employee's decision to change from male to female while continuing in police service. The individual began coming to work dressed as a woman about six months ago and will undergo gender-reassignment surgery in another six months or so. The operation will be paid for by the provincial health-care program.

■ Gay men are better dads than straight men, says a new study by Dr. Gill Dunne of the London School of Economics. After studying 100 gay fathers, Dunne concluded that gay men are more nurturing, caring, committed, sensitive and compassionate, more likely to maintain strong ties with kids after they split with a partner and more likely to be on good terms with an ex.

■ The first lady of Uganda, Janet Museveni, warned her country's youth not to "experiment" with homosexuality Jan. 12. Last September, her husband, President Yoweri Museveni, called for the arrest of all gays for committing "abominable acts." The U.S. State Department said at the time, "We would view the arrest and imprisonment of persons based on their sexual orientation as a serious human rights violation, regardless of whether such arrests are sanctioned by Ugandan legislation."

■ Britain lifted its ban on gays in the military Jan. 12, implementing a Sept. 27 European Court of Human Rights ruling that the policy violated servicemembers' rights to privacy and family life. Gay and nongay servicemembers alike will be prohibited from engaging in behavior while on duty that undermines the "efficiency or operational effectiveness" of

Cedric Joubert/AP

The four ex-servicemembers who brought the suit leading to Britain's dropping the ban on gays in the military.

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